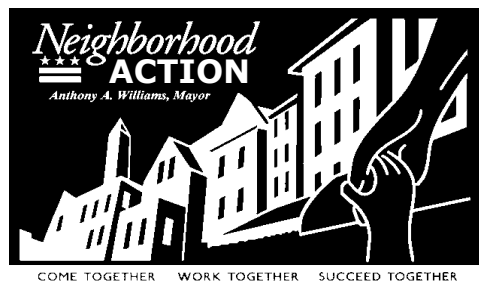


# Citizen Summit IV Preliminary Report

Saturday, November 19, 2005  
Washington Convention Center



The District of Columbia held its fourth Citizen Summit on Saturday, November 19, attracting more than 2,000 people to determine how our city can be more effective in “Lifting All Communities.” Gathering at the Washington Convention Center for the day-long forum, participants discussed and voted on their priorities for how the District can best:

- Support growth and development of all youth;
- Expand jobs and employment prospects for all citizens;
- Rebuild a library system serving all citizens; and
- Create an inclusive city through housing and economic development.

Citizen Summit IV was convened by Mayor Anthony A. Williams and attended by several Councilmembers. Mayoral candidates also reflected on the day's proceedings. The results of Citizen Summit IV will be used by Mayor Williams and others to help shape priorities in the Fiscal Year 2007 Budget and help set the direction of government policies in the coming year.



Citizen Summit IV is part of Mayor Williams' Neighborhood Action and Community Empowerment initiative to engage the public in the city's governance. Over the past six years, Neighborhood Action has engaged more than 12,000 people in setting the city's priorities. As Mayor Williams said, “It's an inspiration to see so many District residents come together working towards a common goal. This summit was our best ever, and I look forward to using what we learned today to make our next budget even more responsive to our residents.”

## Who Attended Citizen Summit IV?

Neighborhood Action sought to represent the city's diversity. Participants' demographics are compared below to the city's make up.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Nov. 19</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Female	62%	53%
Male	38%	47%

<b>Age</b>	<b>Nov. 19</b>	<b>Actual</b>
17 and under	12%	20%
18-24	7%	13%
25-34	14%	18%
35-44	14%	15%
45-54	16%	13%
55-64	18%	9%
65 and better	19%	12%

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Nov. 19</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Hispanic	19%	8%
Non-Hispanic	81%	92%

<b>Race</b>	<b>Nov. 19</b>	<b>Actual</b>
African-American	52%	60%
Asian/Pacific Islander	11%	3%
Caucasian	20%	31%
Native American	1%	<1%
Mixed Race	7%	2%
Other Race	11%	4%

<b>Household Income</b>	<b>Nov. 19</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Less than \$25,000	29%	32%
\$25,000 - 49,999	18%	27%
\$50,000 - 74,999	16%	16%
\$75,000 - 99,000	13%	9%
\$100,000 - 149,999	13%	8%
\$150,000 - 199,999	12%	8%

<b>Geography</b>	<b>Nov. 19</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Ward 1	20%	13%
Ward 2	14%	12%
Ward 3	7%	13%
Ward 4	14%	13%
Ward 5	11%	12%
Ward 6	10%	12%
Ward 7	9%	12%
Ward 8	5%	12%
Outside DC	10%	

<b>Disability</b>	<b>Nov. 19</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Yes	15%	
No	85%	

<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<b>Nov. 19</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Part of LGBT Community	6%	
Not part of LGBT Community	94%	

## How the Process Works

Citizens were briefed on facts and proposed plans, and worked with trained facilitators in small table groups to provide feedback on the proposals and ideas of their own.

Their ideas were transmitted through laptop computers at each table to the “Theme Team” through a network. The Team quickly sifted and sorted through the data to arrive at the most commonly shared ideas from all the tables. After viewing the themes on large projection screens, participants then used individual keypads to vote on their top priorities or to provide overall feedback. Those results were shown instantaneously.



## Supporting the Growth and Development of Youth

Two questions were posed to citizens to develop ideas about how to promote more positive youth development in the District. Several strong themes emerged from around the room.

*What kinds of youth programs and activities do you think are the most important for supporting youth of different age groups (12 and under; 13-18; 19-24)?*

Participants proposed several ideas for each age group. For children 12 and under, the top two ideas were mentoring and tutoring programs and early learning programs. Other ideas included arts and cultural activities and more sports and recreation programs.

Attendees want the District to offer more support for teenagers as they make the transition to adulthood. For youth ages 13-18, the top three suggestions were more mentoring, vocational training, and life skills programs. Other ideas included more college preparatory programs and sex education.

The top three recommendations for older youth, ages 19-24, were job readiness, communications skills, and financial literacy programs. These were closely followed by job placement activities and parenting skills classes.

Participants wanted to ensure that we increase parental involvement in youth activities and engage youth to determine what programs they would like.

*What more would you like to see the District do to encourage parental accountability?*

Participants were split on whether the District should provide more supportive programs for parents or issue a range of penalties when their children did something wrong.

They thought the most important parental accountability strategies were offering more parenting skills programs and requiring shared consequences for parents and youth.

The least popular strategies were those that were more punitive to parents, such as issuing warnings and fines to parents.

## Expanding Jobs and Employment Prospects for all Citizens

The jobs strategy would provide support services for those who need them *prior* to enrolling them in job-readiness and occupational skills training, and focus job-training resources on those who are already job-ready or currently in low-wage jobs. Participants were presented with two questions about the city's plan to help citizens build the skills to find better jobs.

*What do you like about the jobs strategy?*

Participants liked that the jobs strategy offers a more holistic approach to employment, where the fundamental focus is on individual potential and development and is not “one size fits all.” In particular, they liked that we would offer job training prior to employment so people stay in their jobs and that the strategy links job seekers to social services to address addictions, literacy challenges and English as a second language issues.

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## Building a Great Library System for all Citizens

Today was the beginning of a major “Listening Campaign” by the Mayor’s Task Force on the Future of the D.C. Public Library System that will continue through the coming months to discuss what a new public library system should include.

*Of the Library Task Force’s six priority services, which are the most important for our new library system to provide? What’s missing that you think should be added?*

In addition to the proposed services, several additional priorities emerged from the table discussions. The top three additional priorities were making libraries the center of community life; having computers available to the public; and providing bilingual resources, programs and personnel.

Participants then prioritized all nine of the service areas. Of these, the top three were:

- Make libraries a center of community life
- Have more computers available
- Offer lifelong learning opportunities

*As a center of community life, what new purposes would you like to see our library system feature (e.g., theater space, art gallery, retail space, museum, public gardens, etc.)?*

Participants recommended several new purposes for the library system including retail shops to attract more people, using the libraries as public meeting spaces for community issues or adult education, offering more arts and culture at the libraries, providing a neighborhood history section at each branch, and combining libraries with other municipal services, such as schools or recreation centers.

Of these options, participants selected the following three top priorities:

- Using libraries as community meeting spaces
- Offering arts and cultural events at the libraries
- Creating neighborhood history sections

## Expanding Jobs and Employment Prospects for all Citizens (*continued*)

*What concerns you about the new jobs strategy?*

Participants were concerned about whether we are focusing on the right people and wanted to ensure that the District offered opportunities for District residents, ex-offenders, those who are chronically unemployed, and those who have language barriers.

Participants also wanted to ensure that jobs provide a living wage, and that we took into account needed support services such as day care, housing and transportation. Some participants also wanted more emphasis on vocational training in schools.

At the end of the discussion, participants rated the new strategy. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being low support and 5 being high support, more than 89% of the attendees rated the new strategy at 3 or above. 44% of the attendees rated it a 5.

## Creating an Inclusive City through Housing and Economic Development

Two questions were posed to participants to develop ideas on how to develop more mixed income and special needs housing across the District.

*What can be done to make mixed-income housing around public transportation workable?*

Participants identified several strategies for mixed-income housing. Their top priorities were to make sure that developers include affordable housing and include residents in the planning process of development projects. They also want the city to control rent prices, and strengthen the diversity of neighborhoods by including a mix of incomes, races and cultures.

*What can be done to make special needs housing throughout the city workable?*

Participants wanted greater distribution of special needs housing across the District, and recommended that the city inform and involve the community as projects are developed. Participants also suggested that the city should require special needs housing to meet safety and quality standards, and provide more monitoring and oversight over these facilities.

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*Additional information is available on Neighborhood Action’s Citizen Summit website at [www.citizensummit.dc.gov](http://www.citizensummit.dc.gov).*